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## Article Title

### **The Gastronomic Branding Strategies of Bugis-Makassar Traditional Treats in Starred Hotels**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This research aims to understand the gastronomic branding strategies of Bugis-Makassar traditional treats in starred hotels. This research uses an inductive qualitative analysis. Inductive analysis is an approach that begins with field facts, analyzes them based on relevant theories and arguments, and ultimately yields a conclusion. The results show that Bugis-Makassar traditional treats have been successfully positioned as a crucial element in the hospitality industry, particularly in South Sulawesi. The branding strategies implemented by several starred hotels involve aspects of nutrition, color, shape, layout, and the arrangement of slices that not only blend local wisdom with international standards but also highlight the originality and authenticity of the cuisine. The visually appealing and nutritionally compliant presentation, integrated with local wisdom in every aspect, demonstrates how Bugis-Makassar traditional treats can enhance the culinary experience offered by starred hotels, while also strengthening the identity of traditional gastronomy in a global context. Therefore, it is recommended that the relevant stakeholders expand the application of gastronomic branding strategies for Bugis-Makassar traditional treats. Chefs are encouraged to continue developing innovations in a presentation that include aspects of nutrition, colour, shape, layout, and the arrangement of slices to maintain and increase tourist interest in traditional treats. Tourists are urged to include traditional treats as a vital part of their travel experience. Cultural experts are expected to provide preferences for other types of Bugis-Makassar traditional treats that are being eroded or no longer found in the modern era to chefs so that they can be considered for revitalization and reintroduction in menus. Furthermore, this strategy can be applied not only in starred hotels but also in cultural events, culinary festivals, and other related sectors to enhance recognition and appreciation of Bugis-Makassar traditional treats on a broader scale.*

*Keywords:* Branding Strategy; Gastronomic; Hotel; Traditional Treats.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Tourism is recognized as a vital sector supporting economic development in various regions, including Indonesia (Arafat et al., 2022). This sector plays a role not only in increasing local revenue but also in expanding employment opportunities and promoting national unity (Akhirun & Septiady, 2022). Law Number 10 of 2009 serves as the legal foundation for this sector's development, emphasizing that tourism development must address the challenges of local, national, and global life changes. This law mandates equal business opportunities and economic benefits from tourism, encompassing various aspects of community life.

Gastronomy tourism has emerged as a special focus in the development of the tourism sector in many countries. Gastronomy, or the science of good eating, serves not only as a basic need but also as a crucial component in attracting tourists (Tekeli & Bozkurt, 2022). Restaurants and various culinary ventures have become integral parts of the evolving tourism system (Ramadhani et al., 2023). Data from UNWTO (2023) reveals that in 2022, there was a significant increase in revenue from tourism, with growth of 50 percent from 2021. This figure highlights the importance of cuisine as a distinctive element that not only boosts revenue but also strengthens local cultural promotion.

Various countries have successfully integrated cuisine into their tourism marketing strategies. In Europe, country like and Wales have launched culinary marketing campaigns such as “A Taste of Wales” aimed at attracting tourists through authentic culinary experiences (Jones & Jenkins, 2002). Meanwhile, in Portugal, the Alto Minho region has taken the initiative to print cookbooks to introduce and preserve the culinary memories of its visitors (Gonçalves & Gonçalves, 2022). These initiatives not only increase tourist presence but also enrich their experiences, leaving a lasting impression and desire to return.

On a national scale, Indonesia’s culinary industry sector has shown a significant contribution to the country’s economy. Data from BPS-Statistics Indonesia (2023b) reveals that in 2022, the culinary sector contributed a gross domestic product value of IDR 1.12 quadrillion, with growth of 9.43 percent from 2021. This sector, especially the MSE scale, also plays a crucial role in employment absorption, recording a workforce of 3.45 million people with an annual growth of 1.54 percent (BPS-Statistics Indonesia, 2023a). It demonstrates how activities in the culinary sector are not only economically beneficial but also play a role in providing extensive employment opportunities for the community.

The Indonesian government has taken various initiatives to promote Indonesian cuisine, not only domestically but also on the international stage (Wijaya, 2019). These promotions are carried out through various campaigns and participation in global culinary events, aiming to enhance recognition of the diversity and uniqueness of Indonesian cuisine. With this strategy, Indonesian cuisine is increasingly finding a place in the hearts of culinary enthusiasts worldwide, bringing a positive image and increasing tourist interest in visiting Indonesia.

Furthermore, cuisine plays a critical role in cultural preservation and enhancing national unity. For example, rendang, which has been crowned as one of the world’s most delicious foods, not only enriches the global flavor palette but also serves as a symbol of Indonesian cultural wealth (Maranisya, 2021). This success demonstrates the ability of cuisine to unite various cultural elements and introduce them to the world, strengthening national identity and consolidating unity among diverse tribes and cultures in Indonesia. Through cuisine, cultural values and local traditions are preserved and continue to evolve, contributing to the sustainability and originality of national culture on a global stage.

On a local scale, efforts to preserve and innovate traditional treats have been implemented in South Sulawesi, using them as an effective gastronomic branding tool (Musawantoro et al., 2020). In this case, by presenting traditional treats such as cucuru bayao, barongko, baje, onde-onde, and jalangkote are modified in appearance without changing the original flavor. These traditional treats not only offer taste enjoyment but also contain deep cultural value (Atrinawati, 2019). Each type of traditional treat served during life cycle ceremonies holds specific meanings related to color, shape, and

raw material use (Sasmita et al., 2022). This cuisine represents the Bugis-Makassar tribe and is enjoyed as part of traditions and cultural celebrations.

Gastronomic branding strategies in starred hotels have proven to be an effective way to attract tourists interested in exploring the originality of traditional cuisine (Bernabé et al., 2021). In this endeavor, several starred hotels in South Sulawesi have successfully integrated traditional treats into their menus, not only as a form of cultural preservation but also as a tourism promotion tool. However, the integration process often requires adaptation and innovation in presentation and processing to meet the aesthetic and gastronomic expectations of hotel guests from diverse cultural backgrounds.

However, challenges arise when innovations in presentation obscure the symbolic value of traditional treats, requiring specialized skills from chefs to maintain traditional essence while presenting flavours acceptable to the international tourists (Cáceres et al., 2022). Therefore, deep knowledge of culinary traditions and sensitivity to cultural values are crucial in developing a menu that is not only delicious but also informative and educational. The primary goal of this gastronomic branding is to create experiences that not only satisfy the taste but also enhance understanding and appreciation of South Sulawesi's culinary culture.

Based on the description above, this research aims to understand the gastronomic branding strategies of Bugis-Makassar traditional treats in starred hotels. This objective is important to explore because through a deep understanding of the policies and initiatives taken, factors supporting or hindering the effectiveness of gastronomic branding can be identified. This research is expected to provide benefits in the form of more appropriate policy recommendations to enhance the promotion of traditional cuisine as part of tourism efforts, as well as increase the participation and well-being of local communities through the sustainable development of the tourism sector.

## **METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative approach to understand groups of people, objects, situations, conditions, ongoing events, and even thought systems (Whitney, 1960). This research was conducted in several starred hotels in South Sulawesi. This research utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Data was collected through interviews with key informants, field observations, literature study techniques, and document analysis concerning the gastronomic branding strategies of traditional cuisine at tourist sites. The acquired data was then analyzed using inductive qualitative analysis. Inductive analysis is an approach that begins with field facts, analyzes them based on relevant theories and arguments, and ultimately yields a conclusion (Neuman, 2003).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The adaptation of Bugis-Makassar traditional treats to the needs and tastes of modern tourists plays a crucial role in the tourism context. Originally prepared traditionally for family needs, these treats have now adapted to modern presentation and processing. This adaptation process reflects a profound socio-cultural dynamic, where cuisine is not only seen as a nutritional necessity but also as an essential element in the cultural experience. The concept of the tourist gaze explains that tourists seek experiences and sensations that differ from their routine lives (Griffin, 2017), which in this context, Bugis-Makassar traditional treats offer.

Initially, Bugis-Makassar traditional treats were mainly available at street vendors and traditional markets. This limitation has gradually diminished with the growing appreciation for Nusantara cuisine, allowing these treats to appear in more modern settings such as malls and large restaurants, including in starred hotels. The elevation of market snacks to a more prestigious status is marked by their inclusion in the “30 Icons of Indonesian Traditional Cuisine” list by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Prawitasari, 2012). This initiative reflects efforts to preserve and promote traditional treats as part of a proud cultural heritage, aligning with the gastrodiploacy theory, which articulates that cuisine can be an effective cultural diplomacy tool to strengthen national identity and enhance tourist appeal (Solleh, 2018).

The use of Bugis-Makassar traditional treats in the starred hotel industry functions not only as a menu variation but also as an effective branding strategy. In this regard, pallu butung, bolu peca, cucuru bayao, pisang ijo, barongko, taripang, kue lapis, onde-onde, jalangkote, baje, and other cakes are variations of Bugis-Makassar traditional treats. Integrating Bugis-Makassar traditional treats into breakfast menus, coffee breaks, and à la carte options in hotels represents an innovative step in presenting traditional flavor originality to tourists.

Gammara Hotel Makassar is one of the hotels in South Sulawesi that implements Bugis-Makassar traditional treats as a main menu item. This implementation depicts a culinary adaptation strategy that retains local wisdom within a modern hospitality context (Polat & Aktaş-Polat, 2020). The variety of offerings, from breakfast to dinner menus, reflects efforts to introduce and popularize traditional Indonesian cuisine, known for its savoury and sweet flavours, to tourists from diverse backgrounds.

This approach is also in line with the creative economy theory, which states that added value can be created through innovation and creativity in utilizing cultural resources (Shukla & Ailawadi, 2019). The choice to combine market snacks with modern elements like ice cream demonstrates an evolution in a presentation that not only maintains the authenticity of taste but also appeals to broader tastes. Thus, it not only adds menu variety but also provides an authentic experience for tourists eager to explore the rich flavors of traditional treats.

On the other hand, the presentation of Bugis-Makassar traditional treats serves not only as a culinary offering but also as a means to educate tourists about local cultural wealth. It is relevant to the gastrodiploamacy approach, where the cuisine is used as a tool to introduce and promote a nation's culture (Lee & Kim, 2020). This strategy is reinforced through the use of social media for promotion, targeting a broader demographic, including young people and foreign tourists, opening opportunities to attract greater interest in Indonesian cuisine.

The visual modernization of traditional treats is another strategy to appeal to younger generations and international tourists. This update not only makes the culinary presentation more attractive but also adapts flavors and presentations to current tourist preferences. This innovation process aligns with the chef's statement that modern cuisine is about innovation and creativity, emphasizing the need to continuously refine and update culinary concepts to meet dynamic and changing tastes.

Furthermore, including traditional treats in hotel menus also supports the revival of the local economy. As mentioned, various ingredients and recipes from villages can be integrated into the hospitality world, aiding in the recovery and empowerment of local communities. This policy also aligns with the concept of sustainability and support for local products (Giampiccoli & Kalis, 2012), which in turn can strengthen community-based economies and introduce lesser-known culinary ingredients to a broader market.

The deep cultural aspect of Indonesian traditional treats, particularly from the Bugis-Makassar tribe perspective, is rooted in stable eating habits integrated into the local socio-cultural system. This stability provides an opportunity for the hotel industry to adopt and adjust market snacks in a broader context without diminishing their cultural essence. Therefore, the strategies adopted by starred hotels in South Sulawesi, including maintaining production processes according to established operational standards and developing products through technology and innovation, are crucial in ensuring that the quality of products meets the diverse expectations of tourists.

The development and presentation of Bugis-Makassar traditional treats in starred hotels have shown that there are serious efforts to blend local wisdom with international standards. These efforts not only enhance tourist appeal but also aid in cultural preservation. It is important to remember that in every adaptation process, it is crucial to maintain the authenticity of taste and traditional methods so as not to lose the true essence of Bugis-Makassar cuisine. This adaptation must be done carefully to ensure that the culinary transformation does not obscure its original identity, in line with structuralism theory, which emphasizes the importance of structure in maintaining culture (Motta & Martín, 2021).

Ultimately, this strategy reaffirms that traditional treats can be positioned as a significant element in the hospitality industry. Active involvement of chefs in the innovation and creativity process of traditional treats offers a rich and diverse gastronomic experience to tourists. The presentation of Bugis-Makassar traditional treats in hotels, accompanied by innovations in nutrition, color, shape, layout, and arrangement of pieces, shows how culinary sustainability and adaptation can go hand in hand. This approach not only enhances the market value of traditional treats but also educates and introduces the cultural wealth of Indonesia to the world.

### **A. Nutritional Quality**

In presenting Bugis-Makassar traditional treats, it is crucial to consider nutritional balance, which includes components like vitamins, proteins, carbohydrates, and fibers from vegetables. This aligns with the concept of balanced nutrition that emphasizes the importance of complete nutrients in each dish (Molnár & Pal, 2021). Using fresh ingredients in traditional treats not only ensures nutritional quality but also maintains the authentic taste that characterizes traditional cuisine.

Choosing high-quality and fresh ingredients for Bugis-Makassar traditional treats in starred hotels is essential for ensuring delicious taste and optimal nutritional value. The use of fresh vegetables, quality meats, and other ingredients rich in proteins and carbohydrates results in dishes that not only satisfy the palate but also support the health of tourists. This approach is part of the current culinary trend that prioritizes healthy and sustainable food (Mutlu & Doğan, 2021).

Furthermore, the integration of spices, herbs, and other flavor enhancers must be done carefully to create the flavor harmonization characteristic of Bugis-Makassar traditional treats. Spices not only enhance flavor but also provide specific health benefits, following the principle of using spices in the richly spiced Indonesian culinary tradition (Khanal et al., 2021). Maintaining balance in the use of spices is crucial to preserve the authentic taste while ensuring that the dish is not overly dominated by any particular flavor.

The integration of ingredients and garnishes that complement the main part of the dish highlights the importance of aesthetic and nutritional suitability in the presentation of traditional treats. A beautiful and visually appealing presentation not only strengthens the sensory appeal but also supports the nutritional aspect of the dish by ensuring all culinary components are present in balance. It reflects the current trend in the culinary industry where aesthetics and health are considered equally important.

Thus, these efforts in presenting Bugis-Makassar traditional treats in starred hotels demonstrate how principles of nutrition, aesthetics, and gastronomy can be integrated to create a satisfying and healthy dining experience. It reaffirms

the important role of starred hotels in promoting and preserving traditional treats while ensuring that the dishes served meet high standards of health and satisfaction.

## **B. Color Selection**

Color selection in the presentation of Bugis-Makassar traditional treats in starred hotels is a key aspect that contributes to the visual appeal and the initial impression perceived by tourists. Color in culinary presentation not only enriches the sensory experience but also plays a crucial role in the psychology of tourists. Color theory, often associated with emotions and perceptions, asserts that color can influence mood and purchasing decisions (Akdeniz & Temeloğlu, 2022). Therefore, using the right colors in traditional treats can strengthen culinary identity and attract customer interest.

Effective presentation of traditional treats requires a balance between soft and bright colors. Soft colors such as light brown, pastel green, or soft blue often evoke a natural and calming impression, while bright colors like red, yellow, or green can stimulate and attract attention. This balance is important in gastronomy because it creates visual harmony that can enhance aesthetic judgment and the taste of cuisine. The right combination of soft and bright colors not only presents beauty but also triggers curiosity and sensory pleasure.

Color gradation in the presentation of traditional treats also plays a crucial role. Subtle and harmonious color gradations can enhance the visual appeal and make dishes appear more delicious and enticing (Youssef et al., 2019). The use of beautiful color gradations in Bugis-Makassar traditional treats can give an impression of elegance and distinctiveness that sets them apart from other dishes. This technique, when applied correctly, can add significant aesthetic value and influence the perception of taste and overall quality of the cuisine.



*Figure 1. Color Gradation in the Presentation of Traditional Treats*



Integration of natural colors in traditional treats, such as the use of local ingredients that retain their original colors, not only supports the use of sustainable materials but also ensures that the food remains authentic and healthy. Utilizing these natural ingredients supports the culinary trend that prioritizes health and sustainability, aligning with the needs of modern tourists who are increasingly aware of health and environmental aspects in their culinary choices.

In the context of starred hotels, a presentation strategy that pays attention to color combinations and gradations can be a strong differentiator, attracting both domestic and international tourists. It highlights the importance of visual details in the dining experience and how it can be leveraged to enhance appreciation for the richness of Bugis-Makassar traditional treats. Implementing this practice in starred hotels aids in solidifying culinary identity and supports broader branding strategies.

### **C. Attractive Shapes**

The presentation of Bugis-Makassar traditional treats in the gastronomic context of starred hotels underscores the importance of form in dish presentation. Culinary appearance plays a significant role in attracting interest and enhancing tourists' appetites. According to the theory of food aesthetics, the appearance of a dish can influence the perception of taste and culinary quality (Hagen, 2021). In this case, an attractive and creative shape of traditional treats can substantially enhance tourists' dining experiences.

Choosing varied and appealing shapes for traditional treats is a strategic step to strengthen the culinary image of a hotel. Presenting similar cake shapes on one plate not only shows consistency and visual harmony but also facilitates identification for tourists. Employing natural culinary shapes, which tend to be more engaging and authentic, supports a presentation concept that focuses not only on taste but also on appearance, which can affect tourist satisfaction.



*Figure 2. Attractive Shapes of Traditional Treats*

Implementing as appealing shapes as possible in the presentation of traditional treats in starred hotels also aligns with the food presentation theory that “the eye eats before the mouth” (Özaydın & Güzeller, 2021). Therefore, investing in careful presentation design is key to creating added value for the cuisine served. This aesthetic presentation not only reinforces culinary identity but also enhances the cultural experience offered to tourists.

Thus, starred hotels that focus on presenting Bugis-Makassar traditional treats in aesthetically pleasing and attractive shapes will be more successful in attracting and retaining customer interest. This practice demonstrates an acknowledgment of the importance of detail in culinary presentation, which plays a crucial role in strengthening the hotel’s image and quality standards. Furthermore, this approach also has the potential to increase appreciation for traditional gastronomy and enrich the dining experience for both local and international tourists.

#### **D. Presentation Layout**

In the context of presenting Bugis-Makassar traditional treats in starred hotels, the layout of the culinary presentation is a crucial aspect that influences customer perception and satisfaction. Basic design principles such as balance, unity, focal point, and visual flow must be considered to create a presentation that is both aesthetically pleasing and functional. This design theory asserts that harmonious visual elements can enhance appeal and leave a positive impression on tourists (Horng & Hsu, 2020).

Balance in the presentation of traditional treats can be achieved by arranging dishes so that their visual distribution is harmonious from one side to the other. It includes a balanced spread of colors, shapes, and culinary textures across the table. Unity, on the other hand, is emphasized by arranging culinary items so they appear as a cohesive whole without any elements feeling disjointed or unrelated.

A focal point in the presentation of Bugis-Makassar traditional treats can be established by highlighting one or several dishes that are original or most visually appealing. This focal point serves as the center of attention that initially draws the eyes of tourists when they first view the dining table. Visual flow, which directs tourists’ eyes to view the entire presentation from one point to another continuously, is also important to ensure that every element in the presentation is seen and appreciated (Hasan et al., 2021).

The varying heights of the presentation also play a crucial role in the aesthetics of the dining table. Variations in the heights of dishes can create dimension and depth that enrich the overall appearance. Implementing different height levels allows tourists’ eyes to move vertically and horizontally, adding dynamics to the overall presentation.



Figure 3. Layout in the Presentation of Traditional Treats

Finally, a presentation layout that fulfills all these design principles not only enhances the visual experience but also adds to the culinary appeal. Dishes presented appealingly are more likely to be highly rated by tourists, both in terms of taste and dining experience. In the hospitality industry, where customer experience is a priority, meticulous and attractive presentation becomes a valuable asset that distinguishes hotel services from competitors and strengthens the hotel's reputation in serving high-class cuisine. Implementing these design principles in the layout of Bugis-Makassar traditional treats demonstrates the hotel's commitment to quality and customer satisfaction.

#### **E. Slice Arrangement**

In presenting Bugis-Makassar traditional treats, especially in starred hotel settings, the arrangement of slices in dishes such as kue lapis and bolu peca plays a crucial role in the aesthetics of the presentation. The systematic arrangement of the slices not only demonstrates attention to detail and visual consistency but also reflects the application of artistic principles and techniques respected in the art of food presentation.

According to culinary design principles, consistency in the size and shape of slices can enhance aesthetic appeal and demonstrate professionalism in presentation (Moral, 2020). Arranging slices from large to small, or vice versa, creates a visual effect that not only attracts the eye but also makes it easier for tourists to choose their desired slice size. This sequence, when neatly arranged, facilitates serving and improves the efficiency of distributing food to tourists. This principle is also relevant to psychology, which states that individuals tend

to perceive the whole before the parts, so a neatly and harmoniously arranged presentation is generally seen as more visually appealing (Vermeir & Roose, 2020).



*Figure 4. Slice Arrangement of Traditional Treats*

Furthermore, a consistent sequence of slices from any specific pattern in traditional treats affirms their culinary identity. It is important in the context of gastronomy at starred hotels, where tourists often seek a dining experience that is satisfying not only in taste but also visually captivating. Using a consistent pattern in slices indicates a high level of detail and attention to the quality and presentation of the dish.

Therefore, in the context of gastronomy at starred hotels, the orderly and aesthetic arrangement of slices in Bugis-Makassar traditional treats is key to creating a memorable dining experience for tourists. It not only underscores the hotel's commitment to customer satisfaction but also highlights the beauty and richness of Bugis-Makassar cuisine, solidifying its position in the hotel's culinary choices.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that Bugis-Makassar traditional treats have been successfully positioned as a crucial element in the hospitality industry, particularly in South Sulawesi. The branding strategies implemented by several starred hotels involve aspects of nutrition, color, shape, layout, and the arrangement of slices that not only blend local wisdom with international standards but also highlight the originality and authenticity of the cuisine. The visually appealing and nutritionally compliant presentation, integrated with local wisdom in every aspect, demonstrates how Bugis-Makassar traditional treats can enhance the culinary experience offered by starred hotels, while also strengthening the identity of traditional gastronomy in a global context.

Based on the above conclusions, it is recommended for chefs, tourists, cultural experts, and the Department of Culture and Tourism of South Sulawesi Province to expand the application of gastronomic branding strategies for Bugis-Makassar traditional treats. Chefs are encouraged to continue developing innovations in presentation that include aspects of nutrition, color, shape, layout, and the arrangement of slices to maintain and increase tourist interest in traditional treats, while preserving the authenticity of flavor and presentation. Tourists, both domestic and international, are urged to include traditional treats as a vital part of their travel experience, enriching their understanding of local culture. Cultural experts are expected to provide preferences for other types of Bugis-Makassar traditional treats that are being eroded or no longer found in the modern era to chefs so that they can be considered for revitalization and reintroduction in menus. The Department of Culture and Tourism is expected to support this initiative through effective promotion and collaboration with hospitality industry stakeholders to incorporate local wisdom elements into the gastronomic offerings in the tourism sector. Furthermore, this strategy can be applied not only in starred hotels but also in cultural events, culinary festivals, and other related sectors to enhance recognition and appreciation of Bugis-Makassar traditional treats on a broader scale.

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